

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9168

INFO AMEMBASSY PRAGUE PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 BUDAPEST 2779

PRAGUE FOR CODEL EILBERG (KRIZEK AND CLINE)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OREP (EILBERG, JOSHUA)

SUBJECT: VISIT OF CODEL EILBERG IN HUNGARY

REF: STATE 177820

1. SUMMARY: CODEL EILBERG, COMPRISED OF CONGRESSMEN EILBERG, ZEFERETTI, RUSSO, WIGGINS, AND HYDE, MADE A WORKING VISIT TO BUDAPEST AUGUST 13-16, 1977, BOTH TO REVIEW U.S. CONSULAR OPERATING PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIELD, AND TO ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE WITH HUNGARIAN OFFICIALS AS TO THE GENERAL STATE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS AND HUNGARIAN EMIGRATION POLICY. CONGRESSMAN RUSSO ALSO ENGAGED IN DISCUSSION ABOUT HUNGARIAN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS POLICIES AND ATTITUDES, AND CHAIRMAN EILBERG MET PRIVATELY ON TWO SUCCESSIVE DAYS WITH LEADING MEMBERS OF THE HUNGARIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY. ADDITIONALLY, CODEL HAD SESSION AT HUNGARIAN CULTURAL AFFAIRS INSTITUTE (KKI). GOH RECEIVED CONGRESSMEN IN A FRIENDLY AND WARM MANNER, AND HUNGARIAN OFFICIALS DISCOURSED OPENLY AND FREELY WITH THEM. BESIDES CHAIRMAN EILBERG'S CONTACTS WITH JEWISH COMMUNITY, CONGRESSMEN MET WITH NUMEROUS OTHER UNOFFICIAL HUNGARIANS, INCLUDING FROM THE MEDIA, AT AN AMBASSADORIAL RECEPTION AUGUST 15. END SUMMARY.

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2. PROMPTLY UPON ARRIVAL AT 1425 LOCAL SATURDAY 8/13 CODEL PROCEEDED TO EMBASSY FOR OPEN BRIEFING ON GENERAL BILATERAL RELATIONS AND A DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC CONSULAR OPERATING PECULIARITIES, PARTICULARLY SECION 212(A)(28) OF INA. EMBASSY ALSO DISCUSSED AT LENGTH WITH CONGRESSMEN HUNGARIAN EMIGRATION POLICIES, AND REVIEWED DIVIDED FAMILY

SITUATION. CHAIRMAN EILBERG THEN PROCEEDED TO A MEETING WITH SEVERAL MEMBERS OF BUDAPEST'S JEWISH COMMUNITY. IN THE EVENING MFA CONSULAR DEPARTMENT CHIEF PAL GRESZNARYK HOSTED A DINNER FOR CODEL, WIVES, ACCOMPANYING STAFF, AND EMBASSY'S CONSUL AND VICE CONSUL AT BUDAPEST'S "CITADELLA" RESTAURANT, WHERE TOASTS WERE EXCHANGED.

3. FOLLOWING DAY, SUNDAY, WAS FREE. CODEL TOURED DANUBE BEND COUNTRYSIDE NORTH OF BUDAPEST BY BUS. IN LATE AFTERNOON CHAIRMAN EILBERG MET AGAIN WITH LEADERS OF JEWISH COMMUNITY.

4. MONDAY AUGUST 15 HAD A FULL OFFICIAL PROGRAM, BEGINNING WITH A COURTESY CALL BY CODEL ON JANOS PETER, ACTING PRESIDENT OF PARLIAMENT. IN HIS REMARKS, PETER STRESSED HUNGARY'S PRESERVATION OF A NATIONAL IDENTITY OVER 1100 YEARS, ILLUSTRATED SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HUNGARY AND ITS NEIGHBORS, ESPECIALLY ROMANIA, EXPRESSED WISHES FOR CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT IN U.S.-HUNGARIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS, GENTLY EMPHASIZED OVER-RIDING PRIORITY OF MAINTAINING GREAT-POWER DETENTE, WARMLY WELCOMED U.S. CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, AND HOPED THAT A HUNGARIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION MIGHT VISIT U.S. IN NOT-TOO-DISTANT FUTURE. THERE FOLLOWED A COURTSEY CALL ON DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER JANOS NAGY, AT WHICH WELCOMING PLEASANTRIES WERE EXCHANGED.

5. HEART OF MORNING WAS A TWO-HOUR OPEN-AGENDA WORKING SESSION
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BETWEEN CODEL AND A TEAM OF SIX HUNGARIAN EXPERTS CHAIRED BY CONSULAR DEPARTMENT CHIEF GRESZNARYK. GRESZNARYK REPLIED FRANKLY AND IN DETAIL TO CODEL QUESTIONS RE HUNGARIAN HISTORICAL EMIGRATION PATTERNS AND HOW GOH PERCEIVES NATURE OF HUNGARIAN COMMUNITY IN U.S., HUNGARY'S CURRENT EMIGRATION POLICY, GOH POLICY TOWARD RELIGIONS AND RELIGIOUS PEOPLE. CHAIRMAN EILBERG ASKED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF GOH COOPERATION IN ELICITING TESTIMONY FROM EVENTUAL EYEWITNESSES IN HUNGARY TO NAZI CRIMES: GRESZNARYK REPLIED THAT EVEN IN ABSENCE OF FORMAL AGREEMENTS HUNGARY WOULD BE WILLING TO ASSIST, JUST AS IT HAS WITH SOME OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

6. WHEN ASKED TO EXPOUND UPON WHAT PROBLEMS HUNGARY FEELS IT HAS WITH U.S., GRESZNARYK LIMITED HIS REPLY TO CONSULAR FIELD. HE COMPLAINED ABOUT THE QUESTION ON COMMUNIST AND OTHER AFFILIATIONS IN U.S. NIV APPLICATION. HE ALSO LAMENTED

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THE NUMBER OF QUESTIONS, AND THE PRESENCE OF SEVERAL "LAUGHABLE" ONES, SUCH AS WHETHER THE APPLICANT IS AN ALCOHOLIC. HE STATED THAT NOTWITHSTANDING THE 1972 CONSULAR CONVENTION, HUNGEMB WASHINGTON VERY FREQUENTLY RECEIVES ONLY LATE NOTIFICATIONS, OR NO NOTIFICATIONS, ABOUT HUNGARIAN CITIZENS WHO ARE ARRESTED, DIE, OR OTHERWISE ENCOUNTER DISSTRESS IN THE U.S., AND ABOUT HUNGARIAN-CITIZEN-RELATED LEGACIES. HE NOTED DEPARTMENT HAS EXPLAINED LACK OF A CENTRAL REGISTRY IN U.S., BUT AVERRED, AS A LAWYER, THAT A LEGAL AGREEMENT IS ONE WHICH IS MEANT TO BE OBSERVED. GRESZNARYK ALSO QUESTIONED THE CORRECTNESS OF THE U.S. DEFINITION OF "REFUGEE," AS APPLIED TO HUNGARIANS SEEKING POLITICAL ASYLUM IN THE U.S. DURING THE SESSION, GRESZNARYK HANDED OVER TO CODEL A COPY OF HUNGARY'S DECEMBER 1976 CSCE PROPOSALS MADE TO USG.

7. SHIFTING TO THE POSITIVE, GRESZNARYK REVIEWED FAVORABLY RECENT U.S.- HUNGARY STPES TOWARD BILATERAL VISA FACILITATION, AND NOTED GOOD WORKING RELATIONS WITH EMBASSY BUDAPEST.

8. AFTER AN INFORMAL, EMBASSY-HOSTED LUNCH WHICH ALL HUNGARIAN PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED WITH CONGRESSMEN AND DURING WHICH DIALOGUE CONTINUED, CODEL SPLIT INTO TWO. CONGRESSMAN RUSSO MET WITH OFFICIALS OF HUNGARIAN MINISTRY OF POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS TO DISCUSS INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS AND RELATIONS WITH U.S. TELECOMMUNICATIONS FIRMS; REST OF CODEL PROCEEDED TO CULTURAL BRIEFING BY HUNGARIAN CULTURAL AFFAIRS INSTITUTE
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(KKI) PRESIDENT, AMB. RONAI. SESSIONS ENDED IN LATE AFTERNOON.

9. ENTIRE CODEL AND ALL HUNGARIAN PARTICIPANTS PLUS NUMEROUS OTHER OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL GUESTS (TOGETHER WITH CODEL

MCGOVERN) ATTENDED RECEPTION AT AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE IN EVENING. CONGRESSMEN CONTINUED VARIOUS ONE-ON-ONE DISCUSSIONS WITH HUNGARIANS THEY HAD COME TO KNOW FROM PREVIOUS SESSIONS. CODEL DEPARTED BUDAPEST FOR PRAGUE AUG 16 WITH ADMITTEDLY SOMEWHAT GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF HUNGARY AND HUNGARIANS.

10. CROWN AND MFN CAME UP IN OFFICIAL DISCUSSIONS ONLY ONCE, WITH ACTING PARLIAMENTARY PRESIDENT PETER. HE ONLY STATED MILDLY THAT TIME APPEARED TO BE ON GOH'S SIDE ON THESE ISSUES. HOWEVER, HUNGARIANS PRIVATELY DISCUSSED ISSUES WITH INDIVIDUAL CONGRESSMEN ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

11. COMMENT: THIS WAS A GENUINELY HARDWORKING GROUP. THEY APPROACHED THEIR MEETINGS WITH SERIOUSNESS AND REAL WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN A LEARNING DIALOGUE WITH HUNGARIAN COUNTERPARTS. GOH PARTICIPANTS RECIPROCATED THIS INTEREST. IN ADDITION, CONTROL OFFICER, CONSUL LONGO WAS ABLE TO CONSULT CLOSELY WITH CONGRESSMEN AND STAFFERS ABOUT CONSULAR OPERATIONS, INA, AND DIFFERING FIELD-AND WASHINGTON-PERSPECTIVES. EMBASSY BELIEVES THIS VISIT WAS PROFITABLE FROM STANDPOINT OF GOH AND BOTH CODEL AND EMBASSY.

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